

# GE wants to build laser enrichment facility at Paducah plant

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WDRB Newsroom

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- General Electric's nuclear division is negotiating with the Department of Energy on a proposal to replace the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant's aging uranium enrichment facility with a new one.

GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy wants to build a laser enrichment facility that would use depleted uranium kept at the plant. The Energy Department also says it has picked the company to begin negotiating the sale of the uranium inventory.

The decision announced Wednesday hadn't been expected until the end of the year.

The Paducah plant had been a major employer for two generations, but is being mothballed. Layoffs began earlier this year.

In a news release, Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear said, "This is a strong step toward energizing that sector of our economy, while providing economic stability and investment for the Paducah community."

Kentucky Senators Rand Paul and Mitch McConnell and Congressman Ed Whitfield released a statement saying, in part, "We have been encouraged by GE's commitment to Paducah. It is our understanding that GE proposes to invest over \$1 billion to create a state-of-the-art laser enrichment facility at the DOE site that will create thousands of construction jobs, and hundreds of permanent jobs at a future GE facility. From a national perspective, the proposal seeks to save the federal government money in cost reduction and revive the U.S. domestic nuclear supply chain while likely generating billions of dollars in new tax revenues for the local, state, and federal government."